DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 240 797 EC 161 870

AUTHOR King, Ray; Burton, Kathy
TITLE Moving: A Format for Providing Functional Information for Persons with Severe Disabilities Transferring to Another Home.
INSTITUTION Leon County Schools, Tallahassee, Fla.
PUB DATE Nov 83
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for the Severely Handicapped (10th, San Francisco, CA, November 3-5, 1983).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Agency Cooperation; *Deinstitutionalization (of Disabled); Elementary Secondary Education; Institutionalized Persons; *Severe Disabilities; *Transitional Programs

ABSTRACT

To ease the transition from institutions to other school districts, the Sunland (Florida) Public School developed "transfer packets" for each severely mentally and physically handicapped person who was moving. Written by teachers, therapists, medical and other professional staff, the packets contain information regarding individual student's medical needs, likes and dislikes, educational strengths and weaknesses, individualized programs, and other pertinent details. Pictures of each student engaged in the actual activities accompany the narrative material. Planning considerations involved issues of format, production, and resources. Success of the approach relied on coordination with receiving districts and the residential facilities. Although conndered a good idea, the packets were found to be expensive in terms of staff time. (Author/CL)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED240797

# Moving: A Format for Providing Functional Information

for

Persons with Severe Disabilities Transferring to Another Home

Ray King

Kathy Burton

Sunland School
Leon County Schools

Tallahassee, Florida

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ray King

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EC161870

Paper Presented

at

The Association for the Severely Handicapped

Annual Conference

10th

San Francisco, California

November 1983

The State of Florida is in the process of closing two large institutions. Persons residing in these institutions will be transferred to Intermediate Care Facilities for Mentally Retarded persons (ICF/MR) throughout the state. Sunland Public School, Leon County Schools, presently serves 105 severely mentally and physically handicapped institutionalized persons in a full day setting. One-half of these students will be moving to other school districts.

In order to make this transition as smooth as possible, Sunland Public School developed "transfer packets" for each severely mentally and physically handicapped person moving to another school district. Each "transfer packet" contains information regarding individual student's medical needs, likes and dislikes, educational strengths and weaknesses, individualized programs, and other pertinent details. These packets were written by teachers, therapists, a registered nurse, medical doctors, and other professional staff. Pictures of each student engaged in the actual activities supplement the written instructions.

The logistics of developing these packets during the school day, coordination with the receiving ICF/MR and school district, and teacher visitation procedures are discussed in the article.

HISTORY AND CHANGE

Sunland School began in 1978. It is a school which serves profoundly mentally and physically handicapped students living in institutions, Intermediate Care Facilities, and at home with parents. The program was established with a cooperative interagency agreement between Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS) and the Leon County School Board (LCSB), the local school district in Tallahassee, Florida.

The school was originally established on the fifth floor of Sunland at Tallahassee, a residential and training center for mentally retarded children and adults. It has since moved from the center into it's own facility. This move, in addition to providing a less restrictive environment, was a result of a mandate by the Florida Legislature.

Philosophically, the State of Florida has accepted the concept of normalization. With this acceptance comes the state's commitment to deinstitutionalization and Intermediate Care Facilities for mentally impaired infants, children, and adults. Residential services are then provided by the state and private vendors in eight to sixty bed units located in communities scattered throughout Florida. Although many factors are considered, residents move to facilities located close to immediate family or "significant others". The rationale is that residents will have more contact with family and friends if they are in closer proximity.

Approximately 60 severely impaired students have transferred or are in the process of transferring, from Leon County to eight

other school districts in the State of Florida. Numbers of students moving to individual districts range from one to a high of 27 transferring to Jacksonville, Florida.

DEVELOPING THE IDEA

As school age persons move into new residential facilities in the community, local school districts are preparing for the increase in exceptional student services. In many instances, these preparations include additional staff, equipment, and modification of existing, or construction of new physical plants to house the population of students. Administratively, plans can be made based on fairly accurate projections of numbers of students scheduled to move into a given district. This area of the planning is fairly concrete, and can be reduced to a series of well analyzed figures.

A second area, more difficult to analyze and draw concrete conclusions from is that of educational programs for these students. School districts have often times furnished the receiving district with the limited information contained in cumulative records. With exceptional students in general, and profoundly mentally impaired youngsters in particular, clear, concise, accurate information is a valued and often absent commodity from the sending school district. Often times, when students with severe physical and mental impairments move to another county, the receiving teacher must "start over" and get to know the student. When this concern is multiplied 10 to 15 times, it is a major project.

We work from the premises that:

1. such a project would require large numbers

of staff hours and equipment resources;

2. all efforts regarding the project would have to be coordinated with the receiving school districts and residential facilities;

3. the individual teachers were best able to identify the needs and explain each student's programs;

4. a basic format would be needed to transmit detailed student information.

With these elements in mind, the transfer packet project was presented to the Director of Exceptional Student Education. He endorsed it, and committed the resources to enable us to begin the transfer packets. We began by identifying these packets as a school priority for the 1982-83 school year. Packets would be developed for students moving to other school districts, and those moving to cluster homes within our district. Hence, there were 102 packets developed in our school.

PLANNING THE TRANSFER PACKETS

The planning of the packets encompassed three major areas: format - the type and form of the shared information; production - the actual "doing"; and resources - people, time, and necessary equipment.

A. Although we sought a "core" format which would be included in each packet, we recognized the need for flexibility which would allow teachers to identify other necessary information for inclusion. In addition, staff concensus was that there was a need for actual photographs of students engaged in activities outlined in the packet. We then planned the

order in which the sections would be completed. the sections and the order in which they were prepared are as follows:

1. Positioning - the actual physical handling and/or placement of the student throughout the school day, i.e. current wheelchair position, adaptive equipment positions, lifting techniques, etc.
2. Self help areas which included feeding and toileting techniques.
3. Individual Education Plan - which included annual goals, short term objectives, criterion, sequential step plan (how to run the program), and a comment section for any helpful pointers.
4. Equipment needs - a complete list of all adaptive equipment used by, or made specifically for a particular student, where to order, current prices, and which pieces were being sent with the student.
5. A cover letter which included sources of additional information on the transferring student, i.e. cumulative educational records; where to provide feedback on the transfer packet; and where to receive assistance in clarifying any areas in question.

6. A cover page which included the student's name, an identifying photograph, and the date the packet was developed.

7. General information - which included five pertinent areas: etiology/medical and/or physical abnormalities, medications, diet, safety precautions; maladaptive behaviors, (if any); individual strengths and weaknesses; positive and negative reinforcers; and educational assessments. We decided it was best to complete this section last in order to account for changes in diets, medications, and behaviors.

NOTE: Photographs were used extensively throughout the packet to provide visual aids, and to clarify all written descriptions.

An explanation of the students' positioning, self help areas, and IEP's were written by the teachers on the mimeographed page for that section. These programs were turned in to the office, and a schedule was outlined for picture taking.

As students were scheduled to depart at various times throughout the year, their packets were completed according to their estimated departure dates.

B. Production and resources - The following staff engaged in activities as described below, and utilized the identified resources.

1. The school district purchased the following:
   a. 102 notebooks;
   b. 800 plastic sheet protectors for each page of the packets;
   c. 120 packets of 10-picture "instant" film;
   d. 120 flash bars;
   e. xeroxing costs.

   The school owned the camera at the time.
2. The school nurse completed the medical section.
3. Occupational and physical therapists assisted teachers and wrote related service programs.
4. Special education teachers wrote the student's individual programs.
5. The social worker and the hospital/homebound teacher took pictures to accompany programs written by teachers, and ensured that all parts of the packet were completed by an established due date.
6. The lead teacher monitored all written educational assessments for the packets.
7. The school bookkeeper listed all manufacturers and prices for the equipment requirements of the students.
8. The Program Specialist maintained liaison between the sending school and the receiving school districts.
9. The school secretary edited, typed, and

assembled the packets.

The coordination and production schedule were constantly changing due to delays in the projected opening dates of the cluster facilities. Delays were also experienced within the school due to the sheer volume of programs, pictures, and other simultaneously occurring events associated with student moves. The objective was to complete each packet as close as possible to each student's projected moving date. Thus, the information would be current.

COORDINATION WITH RECEIVING DISTRICTS

Coordination with the receiving school districts was ongoing throughout the year. The initial notification of these districts took place in October, 1982. In that correspondence, we invited exceptional teachers and administrators to visit Sunland School and meet their prospective students. All districts receiving two or more students accepted the invitation and visited us in Tallahassee. During these visits, we showed them examples of the transfer packets and introduced them to their new students.

In the beginning of this project, we intended to send a teacher with each group of three students. The purpose was to actively demonstrate the programs to the school staff. Due to the previously mentioned delays, we have been able to send only one teacher to a receiving district.

One key element, not yet mentioned, was the fact that we furnished a copy of the transfer packet to the residential

facility as well. Thus, the school and the place of residence would have the same information about the student.

EVALUATION

Recent discussions with staff of receiving school districts and residential facilities have determined that the transfer packet is a vital idea. Agreement was unanimous that the packet provided clear, concise, and useful information.

CONCLUSIONS (or "If we had it to do all over again...?")

Overall, the concept was excellent, and the production process was fair. This was mainly due to the large amount of staff time required to complete the packets. Although outside typists were used on occasion, the remainder of the tasks were completed by our own staff. It required a cooperative effort on the part of everyone. The major change would be to hire additional staff to work exclusively on such a project.

If a district decided to adopt such a procedure, individual teachers could complete a packet for a child leaving his/her class. On such a massive scale, additional staff should be hired for that purpose.